

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-10 L-03 ACDA-12  
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 SP-02 ICA-11 TRSE-00 NSC-05  
DODE-00 /077 W  
-----077007 221207Z /53

R 221126Z MAY 78  
FM USMISSION USNATO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1773

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 05135

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: NATO, FR  
SUBJECT: FRANCE AND NATO

REF: (A) 77 NATO 1051, (B) 72 PARIS 4578

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SUMMARY: THE RESTRICTIVE, OFTEN UNYIELDING POSTURE OF FRANCE TOWARDS THE SUMMIT, THE EAST-WEST STUDY, AND CSCE CONSULTATIONS AT NATO HAVE LED SOME COLLEAGUES HERE TO SPECULATE ABOUT A "NEW" AND DEEPLY TROUBLING FRENCH APPROACH TO THE ALLIANCE. TROUBLESOME IT IS, BUT, WHILE WE SEE IN THE FRENCH POSTURE SOME NEW WRINKLES, WE ARE STRUCK BY THE OVERALL CONSISTENCY OF FRENCH EFFORTS TO ASSERT RESTRAINTS ON NATO CONSULTATIONS, WHILE DERIVING SECURITY BENEFITS FOR FRANCE THROUGH THE ALLIANCE (REF A). FRENCH OBJECTIVES TOWARD NATO ARE DIFFERENT FROM AND PARTLY ADVERSE TO OUR OWN--AND THEY WILL CONTINUE TO POSE PROBLEMS FOR THE US. WE WILL SEEK TO DEAL WITH THEM WHENEVER POSSIBLE THROUGH AD HOC EFFORTS AT NATO WHERE THE WEIGHT OF OTHER ALLIES IS ALMOST ALWAYS ON OUR SIDE. BILATERAL DEMARCHES MAY ALSO BE USEFUL AT APPROPRIATE MOMENTS. WE DOUBT THE FRENCH WILL BE BUDGED ON FUNDAMENTALS, BUT CAREFUL ORCHESTRATION OF MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL APPROACHES MAY AT LEAST ENGENDER MODERATION ON THEIR PART.

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END SUMMARY.

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1. AT NATO, THE FRENCH HAVE ATTRACTED MORE THAN THEIR SHARE OF ATTENTION IN RECENT MONTHS. THEIR POSITION ON MANY ISSUES HAS BEEN FOLLOWED CAREFULLY BECAUSE OFTEN IT HAS DESCRIBED THE LIMITS OF WHAT WAS "ACCEPTABLE" IN NATO ACTIVITIES. IN AN ORGANIZATION THAT OPERATES

ON CONSENSUS, IT IS EASIER TO PREVENT ACTION THAN TO PROMOTE IT, AND A DELEGATION THAT INSISTS ON SAYING "NO" CAN USUALLY GET ITS WAY. THE FRENCH HAVE EXPLOITED THE CONSENSUS RULE TO THE HILT, AND HAVE APPEARED TO DELIGHT IN SHOWING THAT, UNLIKE OTHER ALLIES, THEY ARE UNMOVED BY WHAT THE GROUP WANTS TO DO.

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2. THE FRENCH, WE BELIEVE, DO NOT LIKE WHAT THEY SEE AS A TENDENCY TO INSTITUTIONALIZE NATO SUMMITS. WE SUSPECT THEY FEEL THEY WERE TOO ACCOMMODATING AT LONDON, AND MUST MAKE CLEAR NOW THAT LONDON WAS NOT A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME. THUS THEIR INSISTENCE THAT SUMMIT CONSIDERATION OF THE LONG-TERM DEFENSE PROGRAM WILL IN EFFECT BE A MEETING OF THE DEFENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND THAT FRENCH NON-PARTICIPATION MUST BE PUBLICLY EVIDENT. TO THE DEGREE THAT THE LTDP REMAINS A FEATURE OF FUTURE HIGH-LEVEL NAC MEETINGS, FRENCH INSISTENCE ON SEPARATE SESSIONS, SUMMATIONS, AND COMMUNIQUE ARE LIKELY TO PERSIST AND THE PROCEDURES ADAPTED FOR WASHINGTON WILL HAVE TO BE CALLED ON AGAIN.

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3. HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EAST-WEST STUDY, THE FRENCH QUICKLY MADE EVIDENT THEIR CONCERNS REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE DRAFTS, A RESTRICTED OUTLINE, AND SKEPTICISM CONCERNING THE NEED FOR A PART III ON IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE. GUIRAUGAUD  
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LATER LAID DOWN THE LINE AT THE DECEMBER MINISTERIAL THAT THE IMPLICATIONS SECTION COULD DEAL WITH SECURITY, BUT NOT WITH ECONOMIC OR OTHER ISSUES OUTSIDE NATO'S PURVIEW. RECENT WRANGLING OVER THE LANGUAGE OF THE DRAFT WAS TO BE EXPECTED IN LIGHT OF THE FRENCH POSITION-- BUT THE FRENCH, WE WOULD NOTE, HAVE PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY ALBEIT STUBBORNLY. WE ULTIMATELY REACHED AGREEMENT ON COMPROMISE LANGUAGE WHICH MET BASIC US AIMS; BUT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE NATURE AND THRUST OF THE STUDY HAS BEEN AFFECTED, BY AND LARGE FOR WORSE, BY THE FRENCH POSITION.

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4. IN BOTH THE EAST-WEST STUDY AND THE SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE, THE FRENCH RESISTED ANY BROAD OR POSITIVE REFERENCE TO THE NEED FOR ALLIED CONSULTATIONS, AND THEY SOUGHT, VIGOROUSLY BUT UNSUCCESSFULLY, TO INCLUDE IN THE STUDY THE CONCEPTS THAT DETENTE IS "INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE BLOC APPROACH" AND THAT ALLIES WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE EAST-WEST RELATIONS WITH COMPLETE FREEDOM. THIS LINE IS COMPATIBLE WITH FRENCH EFFORTS TO CURTAIL COORDINATION AT FIFTEEN OF ALLIED APPROACHES TO EAST-WEST POLITICAL ISSUES.

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5. AT NATO, THE FRENCH INSIST THERE CAN BE "NO  
COMMON POSITIONS, PROPOSALS, OR TEXTS" AND NO MORE  
INTERNATIONAL STAFF PAPERS ON CSCE, EXCEPT ON CONFIDENCE  
BUILDING MEASURES AND EASTERN IMPLEMENTATION. GIVEN THE  
VALUE OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS, AND  
THE NEED FOR JOINT PAPERS TO INSURE ORDERLY, FOCUSED  
DISCUSSIONS, THE FRENCH POSITION GOES FAR TO UNDERCUT  
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF "EXCHANGES OF VIEWS" ON CSCE  
THAT THE FRENCH ARE PREPARED TO SEE CONTINUE AT NATO.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1774

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 USNATO 05135

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6. THE FRENCH POSITION ALSO UNDERLINES THE STRONG  
FRENCH PREFERENCE FOR COMPARATIVELY TIGHTER COOPERATION  
AMONG THE NINE, WHO DO PREPARE CSCE POLICY PAPERS TO  
WHICH THE FRENCH CONTRIBUTE ACTIVELY. THIS APPROACH  
GIVES THE FRENCH GREATER CLOUT THAN THEY CAN HAVE AT  
FIFTEEN WHERE US VIEWS OFTEN PREVAIL. WHILE TRYING  
TO HAMSTRING CSCE COORDINATION AT FIFTEEN, THE FRENCH  
HAVE INSISTED SINCE BELGRADE THAT FRANCE WILL NOT  
TOLERATE THE NINE'S ACTING AS AN AGENCY OF NATO.  
IN TALKS WITH THE NINE THE FRENCH HAVE HARSHLY CRITICIZED  
THE US PERFORMANCE AT BELGRADE, BUT THE FRENCH POSITION  
ANTEDATES BELGRADE AND WAS ALREADY EVIDENT AT NATO LAST  
SUMMER. THIS POSITION HAS BECOME HARDER OVER THE PAST  
SIX  
MONTHS, AND IT IS TOUGHER THAN THE "RESERVED" FRENCH  
APPROACH TO CSCE COORDINATION AT NATO AFTER HELSINKI. IN  
OUR VIEW, THE THRUST OF FRENCH TACTICS WILL TEND TO

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--ISOLATE THE NINE FROM US INFLUENCE PARTICULARLY IN  
THE EARLY STAGES WHEN JOINT POSITIONS ARE THRASHED OUT;  
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- --LIMIT THE ABILITY OF THE FIFTEEN JOINTLY TO INFLU-  
ENCE THE CSCE PROCESS AS THEY HAVE PRODUCTIVELY IN THE  
PAST;

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- --CONTRIBUTE TO A "SEPARATE" POSITION OF THE NINE ON  
A RANGE OF CSCE ISSUES THAT IMPACT ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS.

7. FRENCH OBJECTIONS TO COORDINATION OF CSCE POLICIES AT  
NATO WILL LIKELY POSE CONTINUING PROBLEMS FOR THE US,  
PARTICULARLY IN PREPARING FOR THE MADRID MEETING. WE  
INTEND TO PRESS HARD FOR CSCE COORDINATION AT NATO AND  
WITH THE COOPERATION OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NINE, SOLID  
US CONTRIBUTIONS, AND TACTICAL STRATEGEMS TO MAINTAIN  
MOMENTUM AND CIRCUMVENT FRENCH VETOS, WE EXPECT TO HAVE  
SOME MEASURE OF SUCCESS.

8. THE CENTRAL ISSUE IN ALL THIS IS THAT THE US,  
CANADIANS, UK, FRG AND SMALLER ALLIES, PARTICULARLY THE  
NORWEGIANS AND THE DUTCH, SEE A NEED FOR BROAD COORDINA-  
TION AMONG THE FIFTEEN NATO ALLIES ON EAST-WEST POLITICAL  
ISSUES, BECAUSE OF THE DIRECT BEARING OF SUCH ISSUES ON  
THE ALLIED DEFENSE EFFORT. THE FRENCH, ON THE OTHER HAND,  
TAKE THE US MILITARY COMMITMENT AS A GIVEN, AND THEY  
INSIST NOT ONLY ON THE RIGHT TO IDIOSYNCRATIC POSTURES,  
BUT ALSO ON BLOCKING COORDINATION AMONG THE OTHER ALLIES  
WITH THE US.

9. WE SUGGESTED (REF A) A NEED TO STRESS TO THE FRENCH  
THAT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN BROAD US AND ALLIED PUBLIC  
SUPPORT FOR NATO'S DEFENSIVE EFFORTS, FROM WHICH THE  
FRENCH BENEFIT, NATO MUST BE SEEN AS ACTIVE NOT ONLY IN  
THE MILITARY SPHERE BUT ALSO ON BROADER POLITICAL ISSUES.  
WE BELIEVE THIS POINT IS VALID, BUT JUDGING BY THE  
EXALTATION -- A WORD WE CHOOSE MEANINGFULLY -- OF FRENCH  
PERMREP TIME IN ATTACKING ANY DOCUMENT THAT IMPLIES COMMON  
ALLIED POSITIONS ON POLITICAL ISSUES, WE ARE NOT SANGUINE  
THAT THE FRENCH WILL BE MOVED BY HIGHER ARGUMENTS, AS  
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INDEED THEY ARE NOT BY CITATION OF NATO SCRIPTURES AND  
PRECEDENTS.

10. IN SUM WE SEE CONSISTENCY IN FRENCH OBJECTIVES,  
ALTHOUGH THE EDGE OF RECENT FRENCH ATTACKS ON CONSULTATION

IS DIRECTED MORE AT EAST-WEST ISSUES THAN AT TOPICS OUTSIDE THE ALLIANCE AREA THAT HAVE OFTEN BEEN THE FOCUS OF CONTENTION IN THE PAST. FRENCH ASSERTIONS OF LIMITATIONS ON NATO CONSULTATIONS AND APPARENT EFFORT TO GIVE PRIORITY IF NOT EXCLUSIVITY TO EC NINE POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS ARE THUS ONCE AGAIN CUTTING AGAINST TRADITIONAL POLITICAL COOPERATION AMONG THE ALLIES. WE EXPECT MORE TOUGH BATTLES AHEAD AND SEE NO EASY SOLUTIONS FOR DEALING WITH FRENCH INTRANSIGENCE AND CONSTANT PESKINESS. OUR AIM NOW AS IT WAS WHEN THE ISSUE WAS POSED SOME SIX YEARS AGO SHOULD BE, AS EMBASSY PARIS CONCLUDED, "THAT AS EUROPE DEVELOPS ITS OWN FOREIGN POLICY THREAD, THAT THREAD BE CLEARLY INTERWOVEN WITH THE FABRIC OF THE ALLIANCE" (REF B). BENNETT

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MEMBERSHIP, ALLIANCE, RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ORGS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 22 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780215-0214  
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**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 NATO B 1051, 72 PARIS 4578  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 16 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2611476  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
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**TAGS:** PORG, PARM, FR, NATO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014